

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 30, 2017

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Defense  
H-405, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Pete Visclosky  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Defense  
2328 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charlie Dent  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Military  
Construction and Veterans Affairs  
HVC-227, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Military  
Construction and Veterans Affairs  
1016 Longworth HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Granger and Dent and Ranking Members Visclosky and Wasserman Shultz:


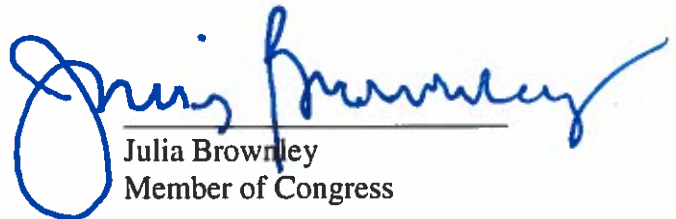





Thank you for your interest and continued support of Psychological Health/Traumatic Brain Injury research within the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) and Medical and Prosthetic Research accounts. As your subcommittees continue to work on the FY 2018 Appropriations bills for the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs, we write in support of continued funding for the programs that work to understand the wounds that so many of our brave men and women in uniform sustain to the most complex organ, the brain.

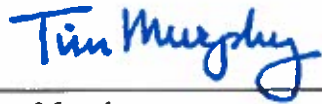
Psychological disorders and brain injuries are the signature wounds of our conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom, nearly thirty percent of the Iraq and Afghanistan War Veterans treated at VA Hospitals have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Likewise, well over 300,000 service members have been diagnosed with some form of traumatic brain injury (TBI) since 2000. The vast majority were diagnosed with mild TBI, arguably the classification of TBI that we know the least about. Recent research has linked concussive and sub-concussive brain trauma to accelerated cognitive degeneration in the civilian population. The same may also happen to the current generation of military personnel barring major advancement in this area of research.

The same can be said for psychological disorders. PTSD has received the most attention among our military and veteran populations, but depression, substance abuse, and other psychological disorders have taken a greater toll than in the past. In 2012, more men and women in uniform died from suicide – a record 349 – than in battle. Sadly, the Department of Veterans' Affairs estimates that 20 veterans commit suicide per day. Clearly, psychological health continues to be an area of concern for our military and veterans.

We appreciate the support you have given to make this progress possible, and respectfully seek your support in FY 2018 for adequate funding to continue the progress that has been made. Funding will be used for pilot studies of promising treatments, clinical trials of treatments whose effective in earlier pilot studies, and implementation of collaborative treatment research plans developed by consortiums of scientists funded by previous appropriations in this vital area of military medicine. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

  
Neal Dunn, M.D.  
Member of Congress  
Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress  
Phil Roe  
Member of Congress  
Timothy J. Walz  
Member of Congress  
Dave Reichert  
Member of Congress  
Pete Sessions  
Member of Congress  
Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen  
M.C.  
Member of Congress  
David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress  
Jenniffer González-Colón  
Member of Congress  
Scott Peters  
Member of Congress  
Will Hurd  
Member of Congress  
Beto O'Rourke  
Member of Congress  
Bill Johnson  
Member of Congress  
Jason Chaffetz  
Member of Congress



Tim Murphy  
Member of Congress



Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan  
Member of Congress



John J. Faso  
Member of Congress



Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress



Walter Jones  
Member of Congress



Mark Takano  
Member of Congress



Ron DeSantis  
Member of Congress



Kathleen M. Rice  
Member of Congress